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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [SA](#) [IS](#) [UNGA](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST ON THE GOLDSTONE REPORT

REF: SECSTATE 112828

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Susan L. Ziadeh, reasons 1.4 (B) & (D)  
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11. (C) SUMMARY: Polcouns delivered reftel demarche to Saudi MFA Deputy Director for UN Affairs, who confirmed SAG will work within Arab Group consensus for a resolution, rejecting US arguments that it would be counterproductive. Arab governments seek a resolution to avoid the public opinion backlash that politically weakened Palestinian President Abbas. Ambassador will follow up with Deputy FM on Saturday. End summary.

12. (C) DEMARCHE DELIVERED: As instructed, Polcouns relayed urgent reftel demarche to Saudi MFA Deputy Director for UN Agencies, Mohammed Al-Agail, and urged that Saudi Arabia vote against any resolution on the Report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (the Goldstone Report) that would include counterproductive elements. Ambassador, who is out of the country, will repeat points in his meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Nizar Madani (who is also out of the country) on Saturday.

13. (C) ARAB GROUP SEEKS RESOLUTION: Agail confirmed that the Arab Group countries hoped to present a resolution that would "address" the recommendations of the Goldstone Report, though specific language was still being worked out. The Saudis would work within the Arab Group consensus, i.e., support whatever proposed resolution eventually emerged.

14. (C) ARAB GOVERNMENTS WORRIED ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION: Polcouns walked through USG concerns in detail, arguing that many elements now under discussion in New York appeared unacceptable because they were entirely political in nature. An ill-considered resolution could set dangerous precedents and severely undermine our efforts to re-launch Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on final status issues. While Agail acknowledged U.S. legal concerns, he countered that the overriding concern on the Arab/OIC side was achieving UN action to address the report's recommendations to mitigate intense public anger over the Gaza war, and "ensure that it never happens again." The SAG and other governments were mindful of the public opinion backlash against Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas when he agreed to postpone action on the Goldstone Report in the Human Rights Council.

15. (C) SAG FEARS U.S. RESOLVE WEAKENING: Agail suggested that while the SAG might be amenable to modifications to a resolution on Goldstone to address US concerns on provisions that might set unwanted precedents, the Arab/OIC side was determined to support a resolution and press for action by the Security Council. They were not convinced by the US arguments, and feared that US resolve to work for peace had weakened. Statements by the U.S. Secretary of State praising

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and the US Congressional resolution condemning the Goldstone report -- which the SAG very much regretted -- only served to reward Israeli intransigence.

¶6. (C) USE GOLDSTONE AS A TOOL: The SAG disagreed that a resolution would undermine negotiations, which he asserted were stalled in any case. On the contrary, the Arab/OIC side firmly believed that the report provided a useful element of pressure on Israel. Agail said that rather than fighting Goldstone, the USG should see the report as a "tool" that could push the Israelis to the negotiating table.

¶7. (C) AT LEAST CONSIDER THE REPORT: The Arab Group "needed a fair position from the U.S.," Agail concluded, which at least accepted consideration of the report.  
SMITH